



Allandale Neighbor

December 2008
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Allandale Takes Second in the City's Wildlife Habitat Challenge

Tom Linehan and Cheryl Silver

As part of an effort to become Texas's first Certified Community Wildlife Habitat, the City of Austin challenged neighborhoods to encourage homes and businesses to set up wildlife habitats on their

properties. The objective was to get as many sites as possible certified as Backyard Wildlife Habitats by the end of October. Allandale took the challenge and succeeded in placing second overall among participating neighborhoods, certifying 25 new habitats within the challenge period. Jester Estates took first place with 36. The Habitat Challenge winners will receive: 1st place – Picnic celebration in a local park for all residents who certified their yards during the challenge; 2nd place – Native trees for neighborhood tree planting projects; 3rd place – A two-hour Wildlife Habitat Design Workshop.

Getting certified as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat is relatively easy. It involves providing food and water sources and cover or shelter for wildlife, and practicing sustainable gardening practices such as mulching, reducing or eliminating the use of invasive non-native plants, and conserving water. The what's-in-it-for-me factor is that by setting up these wildlife habitats you attract more birds, toads, lizards, and butterflies to your yard.



Cheryl Silver at the City Council assembly

Cheryl Silver, certified Wildlife Habitat Steward, took responsibility for promoting the Habitat Challenge and helping with planning, answering questions, and directing people to related resources. Part of the project was to remove non-native invasive plants. Allandale volunteers accomplished this at the July Northwest Park pond cleanup organized by Allandale's Beautification Chair Linea Lemon. During that cleanup, volunteers skimmed duckweed from the surface of the pond.

Cheryl represented Allandale at the November 20 City Council assembly, where Council Member Lee Leffingwell read the proclamation awarding Allandale 2nd Place in the Habitat

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Have you renewed your membership?

The next ANA EC Meeting is on January 22, 2009.

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EDITOR Tom Linehan

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Allandale Neighbor,
PO Box 10886, Austin, TX 78766-1886
allandaleneighbor@gmail.com

ANA Executive Committee

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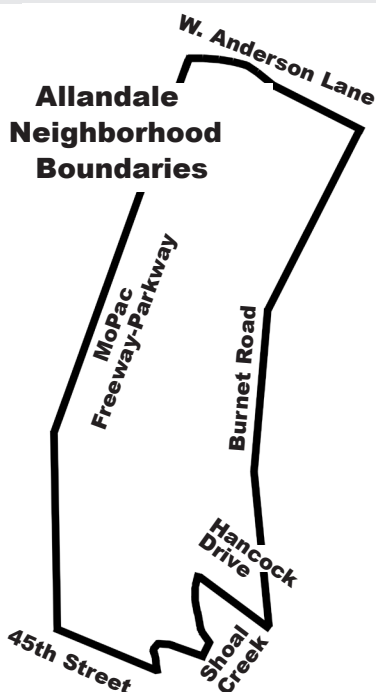
ANA General Meetings are held March and September on the fourth Thursday. The Executive Committee meets at 6:30 p.m. at the Yarbrough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive, on the fourth Thursday every month. Meetings are open to the public.

Committees

BEAUTIFICATION Linnea Anderson
BYLAWS George Roman
COMMUNICATIONS Tom Linehan
EVENTS Joe Reynolds
MEMBERSHIP Joe Reynolds
NOMINATING Allan McMurtry
ZONING AND PLANNING Paulette Kern

Allandale Police District Representatives

AJ Rodriguez, 974-4527
Kelly LaHood, 974-5833



An Interview with Allan McMurtry, Allandale Neighborhood Association President

Tom Linehan

Q: What are the issues facing the neighborhood in the upcoming year?

A: I think the big one is to begin to resolve the debt over the Wal-Mart issue.

Q: How are we going to do that?

A: Advertising revenue from the newsletter will help. We need to bring up the use of membership dues to help with it either on a percentage basis or by stipulating that dues may be used for that purpose provided we don't go below a certain amount in our checking account every month. Other fundraising efforts include the picnic in March.

Q: How much do we owe in legal expenses?

A: According to the last report, we owe around \$38,000.

Q: When you talk about retiring that amount of debt, one has to wonder if the neighborhood association is going to go bankrupt?

A: No, absolutely not. You make agreements with an attorney, and it is our responsibility to follow through. You know, they put their licenses on the line. They put their insurance on the line. They donated time to us. They provided us with a service, and we are going to pay them back. They know it is going to take us awhile. There is no

way under my watch that Allandale is going bankrupt.

Q: Are you thinking it will be longer than a year?

A: Oh, yes. What we would like to do is to come up with a plan to pay it off somewhere between four and five years. This is not the first time Allandale has employed attorneys. Because the attorneys we have employed in the past have always been paid back, we have never had a hard time obtaining the legal expertise we've needed to help us out. I think honoring our debts is critical to obtaining any legal action we might need down the road.

Q: What are the other things the neighborhood will be dealing with in the upcoming year?

A: We have flooding problems coming down Bull Creek, Nasco, and White Rock. We are working with the City in finding a way to move that water out of the low areas and into Shoal Creek where it won't do damage to anybody. The other issues are ones that will come up just like they always do.

Q: Membership is another priority of the association that you mentioned. What do you have in mind for that?

A: I don't think people realize how much time is going into the neighborhood association. I don't think they realize that 20 or 30 hours a month are spent at City Hall or at special meetings that go on for four or five months. I don't think they realize that what is happening with these neighborhood volunteers is they are protecting home values. In fact, I think their work is increasing home values. We are working to make people aware that if there is activity that will affect the neighborhood, we're involved in it. There are some vagrancy issues, for example, where there is possible criminal mischief that is creating issues. We'd like people in the area to know about that and that we're working on it. We'd like them to know we've resurrected the Neighborhood Watch

The *Allandale Neighbor* is published and distributed bimonthly by the ANA. For more information contact Cathy Savage at 680-6281 or allandaleads@gmail.com.

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Program where we've gotten over 40 neighborhood block captains. We have the names of the police liaisons for this area. All of this is important. This is part of the small community that is Allandale, and I don't think people are aware of that. I don't think they are aware of the expertise that is part of the neighborhood association. We're hoping to let them know.

Q: You've been active with the neighborhood association in the past. What was your involvement then?

A: Yes, the first time I got involved was in 1977, and that was over a plan by a church to take out all of the houses between Northland and Allandale from Burnet Rd to Shoal Creek to build a large church with a school and playing fields. That was the first time I got involved with the neighborhood, and that was the first time a lawyer was hired to defend property rights in Allandale. That lawsuit was over deed restrictions not being observed by the church.

Q: Were you president of the neighborhood association at that time?

A: No, I was president in 1980 and 1981.

Q: Have you since been involved in the neighborhood association?

A: Yes, I got involved in the cross-

town freeway. The church fight lasted about four years. The crosstown freeway lasted probably eight to ten years.

Q: What brought you back to being involved in the NA?

A: What brought me back was zoning issues. I was stunned at the proposals for 2-story box houses cropping up in West Austin. You can see them in Crestview, Justin Lane, and scattered around the area. They call them metro houses. They build them as duplexes so you don't have to subdivide the lot, but they sell them as individual homes. Allandale had a zoning rollback in 1980 that set all of the land in Allandale as single-family, and this has been the linchpin for property values in Allandale. Now, if someone wants to build a duplex next to you, they have to go through a long process of getting approvals from the City and neighbors.

Q: Given that we did get that zoning rollback in 1982 do you still feel it's an issue for us?

A: One of the issues has to do with deed restrictions with lot sizes and the conformity within the block structure of the neighborhood. I feel it is inappropriate for someone to come in and build a structure that is so colossal and so ugly that it detracts from the value of someone else's home. In fact, we're seeing people put their houses on the market because they didn't have the wherewithal to stop it. A neighborhood association with a large number of members and broad participation in fact can lend its name to the multiple families that are having trouble with difficult issues.



Alan McMurtry, ANA President

Q: What are some of the committees the neighborhood association has, and which ones are seeking volunteers?

A: We have the Membership Committee that is involved in building ANA membership. We have a Nominations Committee to fill open positions on the Executive Committee. We have a Bylaws Committee involved in rewriting our bylaws so that they conform to state law. We have a Zoning Committee. We could use some people to get involved in that committee. That's our land-use planning group for the neighborhood. Anything that's land use or zoning related is a part of that committee. It is pretty interesting. We have a Safety Committee that Laura DiCarlo is involved in. We have a Beautification Committee that Linnea Lemon heads. That committee was responsible for the big clean up at Northwest Park. They are doing a lot of work. We have a Northcross Committee that will hopefully be able to disband this year, once the work is finished on the negotiations with Wal-Mart based on the reduction in size of the development to 99,000 sq feet. We also have Fundraising Committee that has been involved in organizing the picnic in the park. ❖



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Tree Planting January 10

Linnea Lemon

The City of Austin is planting about 50 new trees along the medians of Northcross Drive on January 10th, 2009. The trees are free, and the City has committed to watering them the first two years. Neighbors are being called upon to help plant the trees.

Nine native and adapted tree species have been chosen, and existing vegetation and utilities were considered in developing this plan.

The more volunteers we have, the easier it will be to plant these new trees. If you are interested in helping, please let me know. All you need to bring is yourself, a pair of gloves, and a smile. The City will provide other materials and supplies.

Planting will start at 9:00 a.m. Meet in front of the post office. Wear sturdy shoes. (Due to the high traffic level on Northcross, we don't recommend bringing your dog along for this event.) To volunteer, contact Paul Smith at bluegeckoyoga@aol.com.

If you have questions about the tree planting or want to sign up by phone, contact Linnea Lemon at linneakay@austin.rr.com or 750-8902. ❖

Sarah Pierce and Friends Concert in the Park

Tom Linehan

Sometimes everything just comes together. Sunday, December 7th, 2008 at Northwest Park was one of those days. For a late Fall afternoon, the weather was perfect. The sun was out, there was a slight breeze and the temperature was in the comfortable 70s. Friends and neighbors sauntered into Northwest Park with their children and/or their dogs or by themselves for what was to be a very relaxing and enjoyable event. The setting was perfect. The stage was positioned just up the hill from the pond next to the picnic tables with Cypress trees all around showing off their dramatic fall colored leaves.

But what made the event special was the music. It started with Eric Hanke, a wonderful young musician who kicked the event



© Dale Rempert Photography

off with five or six songs from his current and forthcoming CDs. (You can learn more about Eric and his music at www.erichankeband.com). He was followed by Sarah Pierce and band who played for a little over an hour.

Sarah is a very talented Austin singer/songwriter supported by what she referred to as a group of musicians who are singer/songwriters in their own right (www.sarahpierce.com). They truly are very gifted artists. The free outdoor concert at Northwest Park

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went from 3:00 to 5:00 on Sunday.

Amy's Ice Cream and Russell's Bakery came with a wonderful array of holiday treats. Ice Cream in late Fall might not work in other parts of the country but it was perfect for this event.

The concert was the first introduction to many in the audience to Sarah Pierce and her band even though Sarah and her husband and



be a challenge having it all come together as it did on Sunday. Thanks

drummer, Merel Bregante, are residents of Allandale. Sarah played a mix of her own songs as well as a few well-known songs from other artists including Patsy Cline. Sponsors of the event included Roger Beasley, Little Bear Records, Cribworks Digital Media, and the Allandale Neighborhood Association.

There is talk about doing this again, perhaps in the Spring. I am sure that everyone who attended will agree that is a good idea but it will



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to Sarah Pierce, Eric Hanke, and all of the musicians who played at Sunday's Concert in the Park for making it a truly enjoyable afternoon. ❖

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Allandale Neighborhood Association Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Mary Jane Matus

22 October 2008

The regular monthly Executive Committee (EC) meeting of the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) was held on Wednesday, October 22, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of EC Board member Allan McMurtry, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present*.

Members Present:

Allan McMurtry, President; Mary Jean Matus, Secretary; Joe Reynolds, Treasurer; Donna Beth McCormick; Paulette Kern; George Roman; Cynthia Keohane; Dustin Little.

Board members had open discussion with the regard to the following:

- Membership drive
- Neighborhood planning process
- Status of ANA bylaws review/rewrite



Steven Zettner at 11.25.08 EC Meeting.

- Update of ANA committees/members
 - Review of communications to members
 - Conduct of EC meetings
 - Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) NOTE: Cynthia Keohane has been elected to the ANC EC as North Central Sector Representative
 - Vertical Mixed Use (VMU) zoning
- There were no motions and no votes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. ❖

ANA Committee Reports

Allan McMurtry

Northcross: ANA is still awaiting feedback from Wal-Mart and the City on the Terms Sheet ANA completed at the City's request in 2007.

Bylaws: This committee will begin meeting to make changes to the bylaws so they are compatible with the requirements of State and Federal law changes. No bylaw changes will become permanent until the General Membership has read and approved the changes. At that General Membership Meeting, the bylaws will be open for discussion and amendment by a majority or remanded to the Bylaws Committee for further action. ❖

Building on Burnet Road

Paulette Kern, Zoning Chair

I want to pass along the information I have at present in regards to building projects on Burnet Road near Allandale.

- Burnet and Lawnmont: Four-story Vertical Mixed Use project with retail on the first floor (facing Burnet Road) and approximately 170 one- and two-bedroom apartments with a parking garage.
- 5615 Burnet (just north and across from Amy's): Washington Mutual has submitted a site plan for a bank.
- SE corner Burnet and Koenig: The Walgreens is almost complete.
- 6840 Burnet (at Pegram): Charles Maund is demolishing and rebuilding (1,311 sq. ft).
- 7820 Burnet (old Denny's site): Comerica Bank has filed a site plan for approval.
- 7793 Burnet (old postal kiosk): A Taco Bell will be built.

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Building on Burnet Road

Continued from page 7

Two points of general interest:

- Valid petitions are useful in opposing zoning changes. With a valid petition, a supermajority vote of Council is required to enact a zoning change.
- Matters of re-subdivision are most commonly addressed in state law and in deed restrictions, which are not enforced by the City of Austin. If one wants to enforce a deed restriction, one often must take legal action. In some cases, engaging a lawyer to write a letter to the party violating deed restrictions will result in compliance to deed restrictions.

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Austin Neighborhood Council Update

Cynthia Keobane

I have represented ANA at Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) for several years and was just elected ANC's North Central Austin Sector Representative. This is an ANC Executive Committee post. I see this as a great opportunity for Allandale to work with other neighborhoods on issues of mutual concern and to take local issues forward to ANC.

My major responsibility is reaching out to all the neighborhood associations in North Central Austin and keeping ANC informed of major concerns of area neighborhoods. We may want to have sector meetings periodically, or when we have an issue to work on.

ANC works to provide a voice for neighborhood issues. One recent example is the Live Music Task Force (LMTF). There is general concern at

ANC that the Task Force should consider compatibility issues—especially neighborhood noise issues—when promoting the expansion of live music venues. I testified at the LMTF, along with many other neighborhood representatives, requesting attention to compatibility issues. ANC continues to work on this issue, while generally supporting the effort to promote Austin music and musicians.

The ANC website was recently updated to show the location of City of Austin property. Council Member Laura Morrison's office provided this information to assist neighborhoods looking at their land use. There is a map book with index and spreadsheet at <http://www.ancweb.org/resources.htm>.

ANC meetings are open to all. ANC meets the 4th Wednesday of every month, usually at 7 p.m., at the Austin Energy Building, 721 Barton Springs Rd.

For more information about Austin Neighborhoods Council, see <http://www.ancweb.org/about.htm>.

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Vegetation Management Project Along Great Northern

Carl Shattenberg – Utility Forester, Austin Energy

Austin Energy is scheduled to begin routine vegetation management work along MoPac and down Great Northern. With the exception of approximately 12 private properties, all of this vegetation management for the transmission lines is on City property and railroad right of way.

This work is intended to maintain transmission safety and reliability along the transmission lines that carry power from our generation plants to electrical substations throughout North and Northwest Austin, similar to the substations at the intersections of Northland Dr and Steck at MoPac. Much of our vegetation maintenance work will also benefit distribution line reliability and safety beneath our transmission facilities along Great Northern Blvd.

Our approach is to remove fast growing, tall, incompatible tree species



(in most cases chinaberry and hackberry trees) from beneath the 138,000 volt transmission lines to provide 25 to 30 feet clearance from the transmission lines at maximum sag during the summer heat, for a four to five year maintenance cycle. Trees that cannot be trimmed to maintain a safe and viable tree will be evaluated for removal. Dead trees that may present a hazard beneath transmission lines will be evaluated for removal.

Fortunately, the larger, desirable native trees, such as the live oaks and cedar elms, can, in most cases, be effectively pruned to provide adequate clearance. These desirable trees will

benefit from the removal of the invasive species, which compete for sunlight and soil moisture.

We will retain low-growing, compatible trees and other vegetation (for example, live oak, redbud, mesquite, soapberry, huisache, grape vines, selected wax leaf ligustrum, etc.) as screening vegetation and as a buffer to fill in the right of way. Our crews will take care in removing overtopping trees so that they do not damage understory/screening vegetation.

We recognize the value the vegetation provides as a buffer to the neighborhood from MoPac and the railroad tracks; therefore, we'll maintain as much low-growing vegetation as possible and compatible with our need for safe clearances from the power lines overhead. By selectively removing certain incompatible, exotic, or invasive species from the overstory, the residual native understory vegetation is

released from overtopping competition and can form a buffer that's compatible with our overhead lines.

During this work, Austin Energy and our contractor, Asplundh, will maintain on-site supervision to oversee the Asplundh crews performing the work.

This work is separate from another tree maintenance project for which property owners are now being contacted regarding tree work near the distribution lines on wooden poles in parts of the neighborhood.

(Linnea Anderson and Allan McMurtry met with the City over this project. There were three Certified Arborists there and a Certified Forester.) ♦

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ANA EC Profiles

EC Profile – Peggy Maceo



Q: How long have you been in Austin?

A: I have been here since 1968, when I came to attend UT.

Q: What made you decide to join the ANA Executive Committee?

A: I would like to see all the aspects that make Allandale a great neighborhood preserved. I would like to make a difference.

Q: How long have you been involved with the neighborhood association and in what capacity?

A: Austin's rapid growth these last few years has presented our neighborhood with huge challenges and decisions. In many instances, our response will affect our quality of life. The Northcross redevelopment issue certainly propelled me to be more active.

Q: What one or two things do you like most about Allandale?

A: I have lived here for 33 years. We have a big yard and trees, which I love, and I find this location ideal. Like me, many of my neighbors have lived here for decades. Our children went to school together. We loan each other tools, take care of each other's pets, and have a dinner club. It is a true village.

Q: What CD do you have in your car's CD player now?

A: The Kinks *Greatest Hits*

EC Profile—Dustin Little

Q: How long have you been in Austin?

A: I moved to the Austin area in the early 90's

Q: What made you decide to join the ANA Executive Committee?

A: I noticed the board's call for assistance in the newsletter and thought I could support the neighborhood in some small way.

Q: How long have you been involved with the neighborhood association and in what capacity?

A: While I participated in Home Owner Associations, this will be my first experience with a Neighborhood Association.

Q: What one or two things do

you like most about Allandale?

A: It has a great energy. I love to see the people walking, running, and bicycling—it seems alive.

Q: If you had a good friend visit from out of town and this was their first time to Allandale, where would you take them?

A: Einstein's for a bagel and coffee.

Q: What CD do you have in your car's CD player now?

A: Sting's *Mercury Rising*. ❖



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Restaurant Review: Cover 3

Nathan Dooley

I'll admit it; I miss Flores Mexican Restaurant at The Village on Anderson Lane. My wife Laura and I weren't regulars there, but we ate there for one of our first meals after we moved to Austin, and we were sad to see it close. The former Flores space has finally been put to use, though: a new restaurant called Cover 3 opened in November.

A couple of weeks after Cover 3 opened, Laura and I returned to the location with two kids in tow. Just walking into the restaurant was a very different experience from Flores; the old restaurant has clearly been gutted and entirely refinished. Cover 3 has stylized rectangular lines, abundant flat-screen TVs, and a higher-end menu. In addition to the plentiful dining seating, which consists largely of booths, there is also a bar area and a separate upstairs lounge.

When we arrived (before 6:00 p.m. on a Thursday) the bar was hopping

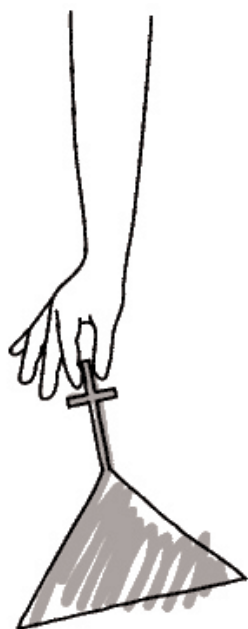
with happy hour patrons. This made for a very loud bar area, and we were hungry, so we opted to sit at a dinner table instead. Even in the dining section, flat-screen TVs were in abundance, along with a projection screen showing four sports channels at once. Although sporting events surrounded us, the television sound was muted, and mid-tempo pop/rock music played in the background.

Although the restaurant offers an extensive wine list, I opted to start with a Shiner Bock. Laura made a much more adventurous choice: a strawberry basil lemonade cocktail. When the drinks came, my beer was cold and, well, just plain beer. Laura's cocktail, on the other hand, was a smooth-sipping but potent fizzy concoction.

The menu is pricey: sandwiches start



at \$11 and entrees at \$14. At my insistence, we started with The Triple, an appetizer served in three connected bowls holding guacamole, white queso dip, and garlic salsa. The guacamole was creamy, light, and fresh. The queso included roasted onions and peppers and was much heavier, hardening well before we were done picking at it. The salsa had a light, almost gazpacho-like consistency, with a subtle pepper bite. The appetizer also included fresh tortilla chips served in a conical basket, which were tasty but relatively few.



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For our main dishes, Laura ordered the Chop House Burger, which is a tasty half-pounder with cheese, bacon, and shoestring fries. I chose the Pacific Ahi Tuna Burger, served with sliced avocado, greens, and shoestring fries. Both were cooked to our specifications and quite enjoyable, although the tuna burger was a bit salty.

The entrees for our two children presented a bit of an issue, since there is no kids' menu. Fortunately, the issue didn't last long, since the kids agreed to share an order of three beef tenderloin sliders (basically, small burgers). They enjoyed the sandwiches so much that they finished every bite. And the accompanying shoestring fries got an even better review from our five-year-old: "I just can't stop eating these fries!"

The fries were indeed quite tasty and unusual, topped with Parmesan cheese and fresh chopped chives. In fact, Laura enjoyed her fries so well, she suggested titling this article "The Fries of Texas!"

Although the restaurant offers a few different desserts, we were already stuffed from our sandwiches, so we

didn't get a chance to sample anything sweet. Maybe next time!

Overall, the service was quick and attentive, and the restaurant would

make a perfect choice for a couple who can't decide between watching the big game and having a nice dinner. ❖

Allandale Pride 10U Select Baseball Team

Jim Whitefield

On Sunday, October 18 at Northeast Metropolitan Park in Pflugerville, Texas, the Allandale Pride 10U baseball team finished the Nation's Baseball Sam Bass Monster Bash Tournament with a 4-1 record. Our only loss came in the 10U championship game against the nationally ranked McKinney Marshalls. Allandale Pride 10U is a select baseball team from Northwest Austin.

*Players and coaches pictured –
bottom row: Andrew Davis, Daniel Schieffer,
Luke Whitefield, Kevin Claver, Joe Deitz*



middle row: Tyler Page, James Baran, Tavian Gamble, Walker Sigman, Jace Franklin, Jack DeShan

back row: Head Coach Tommy Reid, Assistant Coach Scott Claver, Assistant Coach Jim Whitefield ❖

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Area Neighborhood Associations Launch 2009 "Room to Live" Initiative

Steven Zettner

Austin's North Central Austin neighborhood associations are rallying around an open space initiative intended to head off potential risks from adding thousands of new residents to Burnet, Anderson, and N. Lamar.

The campaign, called "Room to Live," will involve a series of presentations and events during 2009, intended to focus the attention of City leaders on the vital role that a pedestrian-friendly environment plays in mixed-use districts. When properly used, open space reduces traffic, reduces crime, encourages a sense of community, and immunizes neighborhoods from urban decay.

"There are a lot of outdoor things people need to do near their homes," said Steven Zettner, a member of Sus-

tainable Neighborhoods of North Central Austin (SNAustin.org) and former member of the Allandale Neighborhood Association VMU team.

"Starting with the simple need to unwind after a busy day. That's a hard requirement for urban living. If you slap down apartments with no way to do that, you're sowing the seeds of failed housing projects."

Open space can make it fun and desirable to walk and bike places, Zettner said. "The key to reducing traffic is to shape a pedestrian-friendly district where it's literally easier and more fun to do most of one's daily activities without ever getting in a car. If you don't have that, then every new resident you add is directly adding to

area traffic, and that impacts us all."

City ordinances require zero open space for new development, Zettner said. In 3 of 4 recent cases involving mixed use, property owners have refused requests from midtown neighborhood associations to

safeguard minimum amounts of open space. Parks Department policies need updating to prioritize open space within walking distance of VMU corridors.

SNAustin.org estimates that downtown's 2nd Street district will have 15% open space once funded projects come on line. By comparison, the Anderson Ln VMU district has just 4% open space.

"Long-term, this issue is the biggest threat to the resilience of our neighborhoods, and the biggest opportunity," Crestview NA President Jonathan Locklin said. "We've got to take this seriously."

"When I look at The Triangle, I see a neighborhood asset that's still going to be thriving a hundred years from now," Zettner said.

Wooten Neighborhood Association's general membership in November voted a motion supporting adequate open space in mixed-use districts. North Shoal Creek's general membership recently passed a resolution supporting SN's open space initiative. SNAustin.org hopes to get similar motions from Allandale and Crestview Neighborhood Associations in December. SNAustin will present the motions to City Council early next year. Crestview NA has invited other nearby neighborhoods to co-sponsor a candidate forum next spring focusing on this and other growth issues for our part of the city. In autumn 2009, SNAustin.org plans to organize a charrette competition for the Anderson Ln VMU district that would model long-term solutions for pedestrian infrastructure, open space, and car traffic.

Members of the VMU and land-use teams from the Allandale, Crestview, North Shoal Creek, and Wooten neighborhood associations founded SNAustin.org in November 2007. You can learn more about SNAustin.org and the Room to Live initiative by visiting the website, or by contacting info@snaustin.org. ❖



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Minutes from MoNAC's Annual Meeting

Kay Newell

MoPac Neighborhood Associations Coalition (MoNAC)

October 21, 2008

Harris Bell Hall, Westminster Manor, 4100 Jackson Ave.

President Kay Newell called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Kay asked for approval of the minutes of the October 16, 2007, meeting. Tom Whatley, seconded by Frances Allen, moved to approve the minutes. The motion was adopted without objection.

MoPac expansion update

Kay recognized representatives of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) for an update on plans for the addition of a managed lane and sound barriers on MoPac (Loop 1). The principal speakers were CTRMA executive director Mike Heilingenstein

and Mark Herber, TxDOT's Loop 1 project director. John Kelly of DMJM Harris, the consulting firm for the project, and other representatives of TxDOT and CTRMA were present. They reported that TxDOT decided in November 2007 to suspend the Loop 1 expansion project due to funding constraints and in February 2008 sent a stop work order to John Kelly. Bob Daigh, TxDOT's Austin district regional director, asked CTRMA to take over the project, which would be financed primarily with toll revenue collected from those using the additional managed lane, with supplementary funding from TxDOT. While TxDOT is exploring new options, such as issuing bonds, to finance its project backlog, and CTRMA is reviewing toll financing options, at this point neither TxDOT nor CTRMA is committed to resuming the project in the near future.

The TxDOT and CTRMA representatives emphasized that should future financing become available for the project, they would not be starting from scratch, but would build on the work already completed. An optimistic forecast is that once the project was restarted, it would take around two years to complete environmental and noise studies and the required environmental assessment and public hearings before construction could begin. Mr. Heilingenstein discussed the possibility of charging a toll on an added managed lane that would vary based on traffic volume, with higher tolls charged during high-volume periods. The lane also would be reserved for emergency vehicles and buses.

In response to questions, Mr. Heilingenstein affirmed that CTRMA, like TxDOT, is bound by the commitment to MoNAC to not expand MoPac right of way nor add elevated lanes



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should a managed lane be added. He said that only CAMPO could alter that commitment. The bridge over Lady Bird Lake cannot be striped to add an additional lane separate from the MoPac segment north of the lake. Proposed changes to the MoPac/Westover interchange could be done as a separate project. All pertinent requirements, including the Antiquities Code as it applies to the Austin Memorial Park cemetery, will be followed. None of those present were aware of any plan for an expressway connecting downtown and MoPac.

Neighborhood reports

Kay Newell recognized neighborhood representatives for annual updates on their neighborhoods.

Brian Robbins, executive director of Westminster Manor, described the Manor's extensive expansion plans, which will begin in February 2009.

The West Austin Neighborhood Group (WANG) has been engaged in the neighborhood planning process and is focusing on the University of Texas's plans for the Breckenridge Tract and on city zoning of a portion

of the Austin State School property that the state has sold.

Bryker Woods has been part of the WANG area neighborhood planning process and is working with Pemberton Heights and the City on a traffic-calming plan.

Old Enfield is not participating in the neighborhood planning process and is concerned with crime issues.

Oakmont Heights is monitoring the progress of the Westminster Manor expansion and construction of the new apartment complex on Bull Creek Road and continues to monitor the status of the state property on Bull Creek Road.

Allandale is working on its neighborhood watch program and lowering the speed limit on its streets to 25 mph. After losing its lawsuit against Wal-Mart, which wants to build on the Northcross Mall site, it is monitoring implementation of Wal-Mart's down-sized site plan.

North Shoal Creek has erected neighborhood watch signs and is monitoring new vertical mixed use (VMU) projects on Anderson Lane, along with the restriping of Steck Ave. for bicycle

lanes.

Highland Park West/Balcones is working on neighborhood beautification and crime watch projects. It was successful in persuading the City to drop plans to reconstruct the lower part of Balcones Blvd. near W. 35th St. and in obtaining a school crossing sign and striped crosswalk at Perry Ln. and Valley Oak Dr.

The Old West Austin Neighborhood Association (OWANA) failed to obtain an historic district designation for the entire neighborhood and is seeking a district covering a smaller area. The City wants to review, but not extensively update, the OWANA neighborhood plan approved in 2000.

Kay asked for neighborhood input on continuing the past year's practice of calling MoNAC meetings as needed during the year but otherwise maintaining the current schedule of annual meetings in October. No one objected to continuing the current meeting schedule.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. ❖

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How I Happened To Join ANA

Joe Reynolds

Well, it was 1979. We had just moved to our house on 49th, and I found out that a political friend, Terry Leifeste, lived around on the next street. Terry said I should join, so I did. We met at the Zinsmeyer's house on Bullard. I had a friend from work, a photographer, Charlie Guerrero, who lived just a little south from the Zinsmeyer's, on Bullard. My son's friend Wes Wells lived up on Shoal Creek where Treadwell joins. I thought, "Hey, this is great, lots of friends here."

Then came the Memorial Day floods. Water in the creek was very high and very fast. The bridge over the creek, on Hancock, was completely flooded. Look at it sometime. My dissertation supervisor lived west of Balcones, and his son tried to drive home down Hancock, across the bridge. His Volkswagen was swept over the bridge rail, down the creek, over the dam, and he died. The next morning, we found a second car, a Cadillac, was still on the bridge—well, the front engine part was; the trunk was over the rail, and it was washed empty too.

So, ANA got mobilized to take care of our neighbors. We started relief and cleanup. Along with hundreds of other families, both the Guerras and the Wells had been badly flooded. Cars and refrigerators and all sorts of debris were in the creek and had blocked the box culverts at White Rock and Koenig. ANA volunteers didn't just haul out junk, we tried to return lost treasures to neighbors; we identified and returned what we could.

Longer term, ANA supported Austin's flood control ordinances and the enforcement of impervious cover regulations, run-off retention ponds, and all the rest of what we now expect. A lot of that was because of ANA members, Terry Leifeste, and Phil Lowell [also a friend from work], and John Panak.

ANA really does make a difference. Thanks, Terry, for getting me involved. ♦

A Home Inspection Can Save You Money

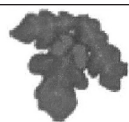
Tom Linehan

Here is a money-saving tip: **H**SECURE YOUR HOME. If you have APD Officer AJ Rodriguez conduct a home security inspection and your home passes, you could qualify for as much as a 20% reduction on your homeowner's insurance. That is a savings of \$200 or more a year!

Wednesday night, November 8th, many neighborhood residents and block captains met Officer AJ Rodriguez at one of Allandale's homes to learn about home inspections. The inspection was at the invitation of Allandale's Neighborhood Safety Coordinator, Laura DiCarlo, who had scheduled it with Officer Rodriguez and sent out an invitation to neighborhood block captains.

The inspection itself doesn't take much time. If you schedule one, it will probably take less than 30 minutes. Basically, Officer Rodriguez checks items listed on the Texas Insurance Code form, "Report of Inspector's Findings, Texas Insurance Code Reduction in Homeowner's Insurance Premiums." (Visit www.allandalereporter.org to download the form). If you pass, he will file the form with the Texas Department of Insurance, and you can notify your insurance company and ask for a rate reduction. The reduction can be as much as 20% depending on your provider.

During his inspection, Officer Rodriguez looks at strength of exterior doors, quality of door locks, and security of double doors and sliding doors. He also inspects window locks to see if they are secured by auxiliary locking devices. If you have an electronic burglar alarm system, he will verify it meets specific requirements. One security measure not included on the inspection form is lighting. Everyone agreed proper lighting was important, and it was pointed out that effective and neighbor-friendly security lighting



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shines in toward the house, not out toward the street and the neighbors.

We followed Officer Rodriguez as he was conducting the inspection and asked a number of questions. Many of the things that you can do to make your home secure just require using common sense. Lock your doors when you leave. Use a bar on sliding doors to reinforce door security. Install motion detector lights, and keep your garage door closed. Even though none of this is new to people, many of us don't do it consistently. Some tips I gained from the meeting include keeping your blinds and shutters closed at night if you own flat panel TV, making use of a light timer when out of town, and keeping shrubs and bushes trimmed below window-level to eliminate possible hiding places for burglars.

You can call or e-mail Officer Rodriguez (974-4527 or armando.rodriguez@ci.austin.tx.us) to set up a home inspection of your own. A successful home inspection will not only save you money on your home insurance, but it may save you the expense of replacing stolen items. ♦

Home Security Starts at the Front Door

Keith Savage

Part 1 of a multi-part series covering residential security.

Here's what you can do to make sure your home doors are truly secure:

1) Upgrade your locks:

The typical residential deadbolt lock purchased from Lowes or Home depot provides only marginal security. Even a \$50 Baldwin solid brass grade 1 security model can be defeated in under five seconds. Ordinary pin and tumbler deadbolts are vulnerable to a devilishly simple burgerly technique called

lock bumping. Using a special filed down blank key and a little tap from the handle of a screwdriver, ordinary locks will open right up in under five seconds—every time. The technique of lock bumping has only been known about in the US since 2006.

To guard against lock bumping you need a commercial grade deadbolt available from your local locksmith or online. Expect to pay between \$100-150 for a quality deadbolt. Brands you can trust are Medeco and Schlage Primus. On my house, I have 5 Medeco Maxxum deadbolts purchased online for \$105 each. For convenience, they are setup so that they all share the same key. This brings us to part 2.

2) Reinforce your door and the door frame.

If a thief cannot quickly defeat your lock, he may just simply kick in your door. Next time I'll discuss the how to prevent kick-in type attacks. ♦

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suspicious activities to 311 ■ Observe the speed limit ■ Keep your pets on a leash ■ Recycle ■ Pick up after your pets ■ Park in your driveway ■ Keep bicycle lanes open ■ Keep your home in good repair ■ Keep your yard mowed and trimmed ■ Join ANA ■ Donate household items ■ Report potholes 440-8444 ■ Correct poor street lighting 505-7617 ■ Stay in contact with your elderly neighbors ■ Take walks around the neighborhood ■ Pick up litter in streets and on sidewalks ■ Organize a safe house on routes to schools ■ Report missing street signs 457-4851 ■ Take a day off work to spend with your family

Dog Talk: Something's Not Right

Cheryl Silver

A stitch in time saves nine, right? Catching problems early saves work down the road, and picking up on signs that something is not right with your dog can head off serious health issues and even behavior problems.

It is important to recognize from the get-go that dogs are creatures of habit—they don't make changes without reason. With this premise in mind, it is important to take note of changes in behavior—even very subtle changes—and try to determine what has precipitated the change.

Recently, one of my dogs started sleeping under the bed and even “retreating” there for no apparent reason. When I found a chew-stick untouched that normally would have been devoured immediately, we went to the veterinarian. My dog had an abscessed tooth that was clearly causing great pain. The tooth was tended to, and my happy bouncing

11-year old girl is back again! Remember, a dog in pain will typically do all he or she can to avoid showing that pain. Showing pain in the wild makes you more vulnerable to predators, so stoic behavior serves the dog well. If your dog becomes quiet and/or reclusive, pay attention.

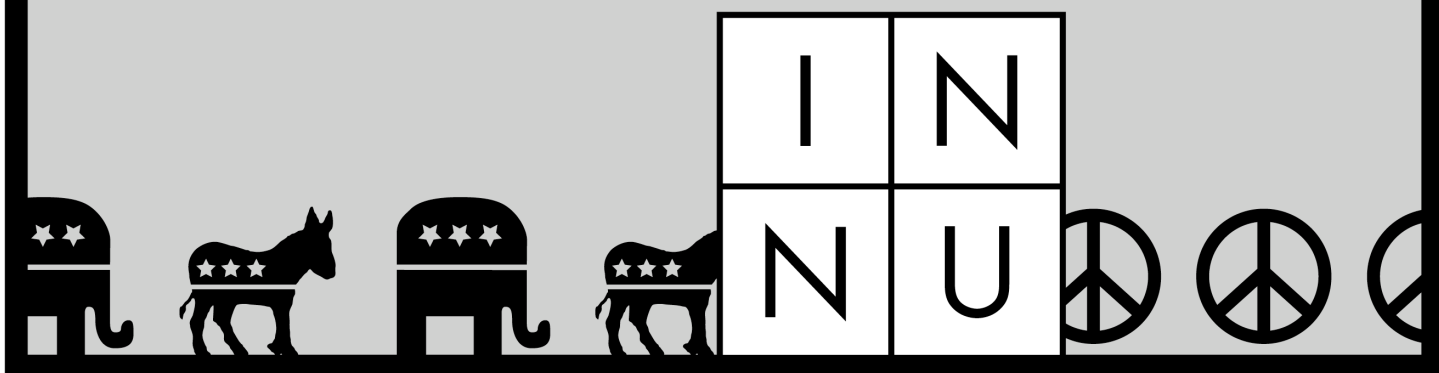
I heard from an adopter who was worried because a newly adopted dog had snapped at her daughter. As the event was described, the child had overhanded the dog's head. I asked if the dog had been scratching his ears; yes, he had—a lot! I suspected he was in pain from an ear infection, and that turned out to be the case. The child's handling had caused great pain, and the mother had not picked up on the signs of the ear infection. If your dog is positioning her head so she can clearly target her ear to scratch, that is a red flag that the ear may need attention. Some dogs will carefully scratch inside the ear and then sniff the toes of the foot they used to scratch. My experience has been that when the dog sniffs that foot (and possibly licks it) the dog like-

ly has a fungal infection in the ears, or even multiple infections.

Another red flag may present itself while you are cleaning up poop in the yard. Typically, dogs will stand in one place as they relieve themselves, and the deposit will be in a pile. If you start noticing that the individual deposits are spaced apart from each other, it is possible your dog is experiencing pain in her hips or lower back and is not able to stay in one place as she pottys. She has to repeatedly relax (and move a bit) then continue, so the feces are no longer found in a consolidated pile. Get your dog examined so this pain can be evaluated and treated.

A dog who is drinking large amounts of water and then urinating frequently (and possibly having accidents in the house) needs attention. This is not a dog who has “forgotten” his house-training. Kidney issues, diabetes, Cushing's, etc. could be involved, or your dog could have a simple urinary tract infection. Families with multiple dogs will need to be attentive to who is drinking all the water, and families

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who keep dogs outside may not have the opportunity to observe a specific dog drinking large amounts of water.

Finally, I want to mention a condition that shows up many different ways in both young and old dogs. It is very, very common—it is hypothyroidism. The saddest situation is when a dog becomes grouchy, snaps at a family member or acts downright scary, and the dog is euthanized without testing for hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism shows up in many different ways, but many dogs have only one or two symptoms. Some symptoms are lethargy, recurrent infections, obesity even on a controlled diet, skin issues, always acting cold, stiffness in the joints, or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde behavior. All you need is one symptom to consider this diagnosis. I have dealt with many dogs with this condition, and a very inexpensive medication is the fix.

All of this is to say, there is generally a reason for change in your dog; do not assume the change is age-related or a spiteful behavior. If you would like to talk more about this, you are welcome to give me a call. Of course, I am not a veterinarian, but we can still chat.

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Gullett Good News

Stephanie Schultz

November is a busy time for all, but it is an especially busy time at Gullett. November 1st was the day of the Gullett carnival. Friendly crowds enjoyed perfect weather, delicious food, and lots of great games. The dunking booth was a big draw for students as many dunked their teachers ... and even the principal.

The school is hoping to draw traffic to its website as well. The school debuted a new site this month. More user-friendly and full of teacher and staff blogs, the site went live in mid-November. Check it out at www.gullett-geckos.com.

Proud to be an American

Throughout the month, the students showed their red, white, and blue colors as they participated in a mock presidential election. Like the popular vote in the country, the Geckos voted for Barack Obama as their next president.

That American spirit was alive the next week as well, as the Geckos welcomed many veterans to its Veterans Day Assembly on November 11. Patriotic songs and speeches filled the cafeteria, and students brought pictures of their relatives in the military to showcase around the school.

Food, Glorious Food

Kindergarten teacher Sherry Glidewell won a \$500 ABC Grant for her "Smart Snacks" cooking lessons program. Her lucky kindergartners have weekly cooking lessons where they are in charge of measuring, reading, and writing recipes, and best of all cooking and eating tasty, healthy snacks.

Parents got more than a small snack when they came for Thanksgiving lunch with their kids on November 20. The cafeteria staff did not disappoint as students and parents alike feasted on turkey and potatoes, and pumpkin pie too.

The students also celebrated "Eat Bright Week," in November, where they were encouraged to eat a fruit or a vegetable every day at lunch.

Booking Events

The next week featured the "Safari Book Fair." From December 8-12, students, staff, and parents had a chance to buy great books for themselves or as holiday gifts. The annual event, held in the library, is a great fundraiser for the school.

"I love book fair," commented second grader Gracie Smith. "If we read enough books in the summer, we get a coupon to use at the fair. Ms. Gooch makes it lots of fun! One year she was a snowy ice princess."

The second graders were busy the week of book fair. They were joined by the first graders for a "holidays and harmony" performance on December 9.

Beautiful voices will fill the Gullett cafeteria again on December 16; the concert choir performs for parents, friends, and neighbors. Check it out at 7 p.m.

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Continued on page 22

Gullett Good News

Continued from page 21

Celebrating the Holiday

The entire school will have their holiday parties on December 17, while the students (and teachers!) eagerly anticipate the holiday break. The last day of classes is December 18, when the fourth graders visit the capitol and learn about state government.

School reconvenes on January 6, when lots of well-rested students hit the books, and prepare for second semester.

American Cockroaches a.k.a. Waterbugs

Wizzie Brown

American cockroaches, also called waterbugs or palmetto bugs, are about 1 1/2" long, reddish-brown with tan markings on the pronotum (the shield that covers the head). Nymphs look similar to the adults, but do not have fully developed wings. Like all cockroaches, females lay their eggs in a purse-like sac called an ootheca.

American cockroaches are a common pest that breeds indoors in Texas. Typically, these cockroaches move in from outdoors in search of food and water or to escape cold temperatures. They can enter structures around pipe penetrations, vents in the attic, through weepholes, or via cracks around doors and windows.

Exclusion is great method to keep the cockroaches outside. Check weather stripping around doors and windows to make sure there is a good seal. Use caulk to seal around pipe penetrations or any cracks and crevices that may lead into the home. If your home has a brick or stone façade, use steel wool or copper mesh to block the weep holes (steel wool should not be used on light color façade, since it rusts when it gets wet).

Commonly used formulations for cockroach management include baits, sprays, and dusts. Residual sprays and dusts should not be used in the same location as baits to avoid contamination of the baits. Sprays and dusts should be targeted to crack and crevice areas or wall voids. When using baits,

old bait should be scraped away before new bait is placed out. Target baits to areas where cockroaches will be able to locate it easily.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Also check out www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com. ❖

Wildlife Habitat Challenge

continued from front page

Challenge. Each neighborhood representative had an opportunity to talk briefly about the project. Cheryl told how excited she was with the project and relayed a story from Steve Owens, one of the neighbors whose yard became certified. His son surprised him one day after reporting hearing a birdcall in their yard from a bird that he'd learned about with his dad on the computer.

The excitement about the project is understandable once you see the wildlife habitats. Pictured on page 23 is one of the aquatic habitats created by Trish



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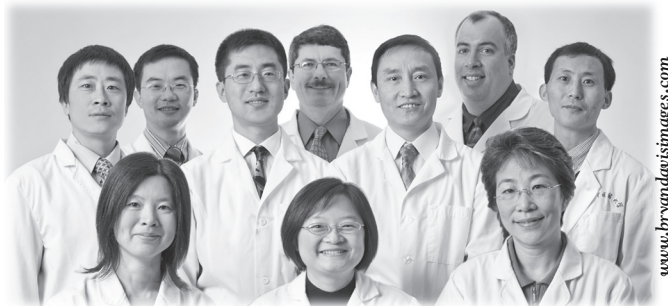
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Front Row: Yuxia Qiu, LAc 568; Zheng Zeng, LAc 678; Zhongling Zhang, LAc 441. Not pictured: Yan Wu, LAc 443

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Trish Roberts-Miller's aquatic habitat.

Roberts-Miller in her yard. To the right is a photo of owlets from another habitat in her yard. We have more photos on the Allandale web site (www.allandalereporter.org) from other Allandale residents whose yards were certified.

Here are few more comments from Cheryl and people in the neighborhood who have gotten involved with the project.

From Cheryl Silver: "Wow! Our neighbors are so smart! I just heard from one of our neighbors, Sean Starke, who has created a water source

by capturing water from their AC drip hose, and they are seeing lots of little critters coming for a drink! So smart, smart, smart!"

From Steve Owens: "I've noticed a lot more butterflies, bumblebees, honeybees, toads, anoles, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, and song birds as I've converted to native plants, added a birdbath and butterfly puddling area, created a brush pile, and added plants as food sources, supplementing with a hummingbird feeder and suet cages. It's been a lot of fun."

From Trish Roberts-Miller: "We have the [Backyard Wildlife Habitat] sign up

on our fence, and it gives me a thrill every time I see it!"

Of course, this year's challenge has concluded, but that should not stop you from creating a wildlife habitat in your yard and getting it certified. You will

Owls hang out in their owl habitat.



find more information here: www.mmf.org/backyard/certify.cfm. You can also contact Cheryl at csilver2@austin.rr.com or call her at 454-7219. ❖

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Constable's Notebook

Constable Bruce Elfant

This year's presidential and congressional elections mattered more than perhaps any in my lifetime. Our new president will confront two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Unlike some elections, there was a real difference between the candidates. I have written more than a few columns that urged citizens to participate in their democracy by voting for candidates and issues that represent their interests. I expressed dissatisfaction that less than 10% of registered voters have determined who is elected to city council, school board, and community college boards. I railed about the fact that presidential elections in the United States have attracted far fewer of its citizens than almost any other democracy. I used guilt and even shame to

encourage more citizens to exercise their constitutional right and responsibility to vote.

Did the most closely watched and historic and exciting presidential election in generations live up to the expectations of historic voter turnout? The good news is that the national percentage turnout in the presidential election was the largest since 1968. But while more than a record 125,000,000 Americans cast votes this year, turnout only exceeded the 2004 voter turnout by about 3 million votes. Travis County voters again led Texas counties in voter turnout. Though the total number of votes cast increased by almost 50,000, the turnout percentage only increased from 64% in 2004 to just over 66% this year. Five voting precincts including 237 (Highland Park Baptist Church) and 256 (Casis Elementary School) exceeded

80% turnout but less than half of the registered voters turned out in 11 Travis County precincts.

We all hope that the incoming administration and Congress will quickly and effectively address the challenges they inherited. This holiday season local officials and our non-profit community, also hit hard by the economic downturn, need help in order to respond to an increased need for shelter, food, clothing, toys, and medical assistance. All the great religions speak to our need to help the least among us. I am proud that my employees have decided to dramatically downsize our office holiday party in order to sponsor several families who are in crisis. There can be no better gift than to assist others who have not been blessed with health, wealth, or stable family lives.

I hope you and your family enjoy a safe and happy holiday season. ❖

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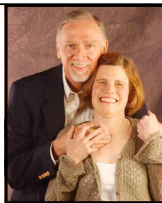
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